

**INDIAN**

# Fable Literature



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The discovery made known by Warren Hastings, Halhed, and Wilkins, to the western world, that behind the Vernacular tongues of India, there stands a more ancient language bearing the same relationship to them, that Latin bears to the Romance languages of Europe, was an intellectual revelation of no small value. To the missionaries of an earlier date, is willingly conceded the palm, for the first discovery of this ancient tongue. But the times were not then propitious for a full appreciation, of the rich vein they had stumbled on, and, outside their own missions, this discovery of the Jesuit Fathers might almost as well have continued to be a Brahmanic secret.

No steps towards a knowledge of the language and literature of Ancient India, was of equal importance to the publication of Halhed's "Code of Gentoo laws, or ordinations of the Pundits, from a Persian translation made from the original written in the Shanscrit language." That collection of native laws was made under the immediate authority of Warren Hastings, by eleven Brahmins who prepared a Persian version for Nathaniel Brassey Halhed, who, in his turn, provided an English translation, and preface, giving all the information he could, concerning the original language in which these laws were written. The English version was published in 1776. Halhed's preface states that "the professors of the ordinances here collected still speak the original language in which they were composed, though it is now entirely unknown to the bulk of the people."

It would be interesting to retrace the methods by which the scholars of Europe, aided by Indian pandits, unravelled the complex structure of this old tongue; to take a bird's eye view of the literature it has preserved; and to follow up the effect of its discovery on the science of linguistics. But suffice it to say, knowledge

of the structure of Sanskrit enabled Colebrooke, Bopp, the Brothers Grimm, and their successors, to recast the science of grammar, and to establish the auxiliary science of comparative philology. The volume of Sanskrit literature, discovered to the present time, exceeds in bulk that of both Greece and Rome. It contains much chaff, as well as wheat, for ancient book makers, like their successors in that art, were but human. Sanskrit literature has, however, this unique value ; it shows us the continuous, unbroken development for three thousand years, of the intellectual, and spiritual life, of the most gifted branch of the Indogermanic stock. It is the best mental history of the division to which we ourselves are most nearly related of the human family. Doctor Schroeder, in a course of fifty lectures on "*Indiens Literatur und Cultur in historischer entwicklung*" has recently fully dealt with this interesting question. His work combines the minute accuracy of German scholarship, with the piquant art of a modern essayist, and is a helpful guide to rightly comprehending the stages of intellectual and moral life, which in the course of long centuries produced this remarkable literature.

Within the memory of living men, a philosopher like Dugald Stewart thought this ancient language was a modern forgery, by a shrewd priesthood, to thwart the missionaries ; and good Fra Bartholomy believed, that even the subtle Brahmins would not have been equal to so difficult a task unaided by the supernatural cunning of the evil one. The European knowledge of Sanskrit began but little before the commencement of this century. About that time, Charles Wilkins, an employe of the East India Company, fairly mastered the language, and with his own hands cut the first punches and cast the first type for printing in Sanskrit characters. But a few short years have wrought great change. Sanskrit is now accorded the seat of honor amongst the Aryan tongues. Modern dictionaries carefully point out Sanskrit derivations, and most colleges make some knowledge of Sanskrit a part of their language course. Ten years since, the number of separate Sanskrit MSS. known to exist was estimated at ten thousand, and from the systematic search in India, set on foot by the British Government, considerable additions have since been made to that number. I have here the ordinary trade catalogue of Pandit Jyestharam Mukundji, a Bombay bookseller. It contains for sale, more than twelve hundred books printed in Sanskrit, and arranged in thirty classes. Some are different

editions of the same work, and a few are printed in Europe, but most of them are distinct works printed in India.

Of this extensive field, the comparatively small portion over which I ask the favour of your company, is that of Indian fable literature. In our ramble over this corner, we may find but wayside wild flowers, modest and insignificant compared with the sublime beauty of the Vaidic Hymns, or the majestic descriptions of the Epic Poems ; but we shall find them graceful after their own fashion, and no more to be despised, than the wild-thyme and violets, which give fragrance to an English lane, are to be slighted, because there are richer flowers.

Indian literature has several collections of fables. Amongst the chief of them, are the Katha Sarit Sagara, or ocean stream of fable, by Somadeva Bhatta of Cashmere ; the Panchatantra ; and the Hitopadesa. The Katha Sarit Sagara comprises eighteen books of stories, condensed in the eleventh or twelfth century, from an earlier and larger collection. The other two are mainly books of apologues, or stories, in which animals are made to talk like men, with the intention of conveying some moral lesson. The numerous stories contained in the ocean stream of fable, are somewhat in the manner of those in the Arabian nights, but are full of Brahmanic legends, and startling instances of the power over the rest of mankind, claimed to be controlled by Hindu saints and ascetics. Prof. Brockhaus edited the text, and gave a German translation of this work, commencing half a century ago. In 1880 the Asiatic Society of Bengal published in the *Bibliotheca Indica* an English translation by Mr. C. H. Tawney. The stories were illustrated, by the translator, with notes of similar legends, current in other countries.

The Panchatantra, the pentateuch of apologues, is the most interesting of the many amusing books of its class India has produced. Its popularity has been, and still is, proportionate to its excellence. It has made its way into every civilized country in the world. Except the Bible and Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, no other book has been translated into so many different languages. The Editor of the last English edition of these fables, Mr. Jacobs, has traced them into thirty-eight languages in one hundred and twelve versions, which have passed into one hundred and eighty editions. Under various names, no less than twenty translations of different versions of these fables have been done into English. In view of these facts there is



hardly room for surprise that Mr. Jacobs thinks man might be defined as a "tale-telling animal, with the corollary of woman as a "tale-bearing one."

The commonest name for the English translations of these fables is Fables of Pilpay, or, as sometimes spelled, Bidpai. Both names there is little doubt, may be regarded as corruptions of the Sanskrit word *Vidyapati*, lord of knowledge. North's rare edition, reprinted last year, under the care of Mr. Jacobs, is also called the Moral Philosophy of Doni, because it was translated from the Spanish in 1552, by the Italian Philosopher Antoine Francois Doni. The version of Doni was translated into vigorous English in 1570, by Sir. Thomas North, whose Plutarch is well-known to be the foundation of Shakespeare's Roman plays. These fables have had a strange history. If we follow back the Spanish translation used by Doni, we shall find it comes from a Latin Version, which goes back to a Hebrew Version, which in its turn goes back to the Arabic, which reaches the original Sanskrit, after passing through the Pehlevi, the language of Old Persia.

The route taken by North's Bidpai, is one of the longest and most circuitous made by these fables in their passage from the East to the West. Other versions succeeded in making a shorter cut, without the aid of a string of intermediate languages, or centuries of delay. There have been at least five direct translations from Sanskrit into English. There is also the English translation made from the Arabic, by the Rev. W. Knatchbull; that into French from the Tamil, made by the Abbe Dubois; and the translation from Sanskrit into German made by Prof. Benfey. That by Dubois is prized because it is the Dekhan, or Southern version of these fables, and that by Benfey is accompanied with a closely printed volume of six hundred pages of notes and commentary, which makes it an unequalled treasury of information concerning the Panchatantra, and an introduction, by one of the best scholars of our time, to the history of modern fiction.

The Panchatantra, as it has come down to us, consists—as its name, *pancha*, five, implies—of five books, containing eighty-four fables. From the internal evidence obtained from all the different versions, each of which has fables peculiar to itself, Benfey thinks that the collection at one time had at least double the number of books and stories it now has. The Hitopadesa, as Narayana, the

compiler of the book, states, is mainly taken from the Panchatantra, though a number of the stories are pruned away. In both books the stories are told in prose, and in a similar style; but the narrative is interlarded with couplets taken from the whole range of antecedent Sanskrit poetry. Many of these slokas or verses, in a pithy, sententious form, give the best maxims for the guidance of human conduct that were current, and had reached, in ancient India, the dignity of moral axioms.

The stories are told with brevity and directness, which make them realistic and fix them in the memory. Throughout, though the standard of morals is not that of the nineteenth century, it commands respect, and but few of the stories are marred by the coarseness that disfigures much of the fable literature nearer home. In most of the stories a chord is struck that human hearts, irrespective of time and place, respond to. Everywhere kindness, consideration for others, contentment, heroism, moderation, fortitude, industry, and the advantages of knowledge, are inculcated. The animals talk and act like men, but the cast of characters shews the different degrees of esteem in which the different animals were then held. Their standard was much like our own. The serpent was cunning, the cat deceitful, the parrot pert, the mouse industrious, and the ass stupid. The following fable might have been written yesterday. It is the VII. fable, V. book of the Panchatantra, and is entitled "The Singing Donkey."

"An ass, whose master, after the day's drudgery, let him roam at will, made the acquaintance of a jackal, and together at night they broke down fences, and plundered fields and gardens. One night, as they were munching away in the middle of a garden, the ass said to the jackal:—'Kinsman, the night is so lovely, I will give you a song. What key shall I sing in?' But the jackal said:—'Why make so much noise? Ours is a risky business, and thieves and lovers must be cautious. Besides yours is a rasping voice, by no means pleasant, so you had better go on eating and let singing alone.' 'Ah,' said the ass, 'you live in the woods, and don't know the magic power of music.' At the same time he struck up:—'When the harvest moon breaks through the gloaming, etc.' 'Pretty enough words,' said the jackal, 'but your voice is rough, besides you don't understand music, and why make a noise to risk our being disturbed?' 'What,' said the ass, 'I not

"know music? Why, there are seven notes, three octaves, one and twenty intervals, and forty-nine measures. Yet you think I don't know music. But you shall see,' and as he said so, he stretched out his neck and began to bray. The jackal said :—' Well, if you won't take advice, I shall make for the gate, and look out for the watchman. You sing on to your heart's content.'

"The watchman soon heard the noise, ran out with a stick, and cudgelled the ass till he fell. Then, fastening a tub with a hoie cut through the bottom on the ass's neck, he left him. The ass soon recovered, and broke through the garden fence into the common, but could not free himself from the watchman's neck-yoke. Meanwhile the jackal saw him, and said with a leer : " ' Though I begged you, uncle, to stop that singing, you would not mind ; now you are paid for your music with a fine necklace.' Thus, he who has no wit of his own, and will not heed the advice of a friend, goes on to destruction."

Hitopadesa, the name of the smaller book of fables, is a compound word meaning, friendly advice. It is an appropriate name, as the stories are arranged in four books called, the getting of friends ; the separation of friends ; war ; and reconciliation. There is also an introductory explanation of the origin and object of the book. The introduction opens with verses in praise of learning which it lauds as the one thing above price, imperishable and which cannot be taken away. It is the true allseeing eye, which pierces the mists of doubt, and makes things that were hidden known. King Sudarsana at his Capital, Patilaputra, on the Ganges, one day hearing the praises of learning chanted in this strain, was deeply impressed by what he heard, and became thoughtful over the course of his own sons.

The King became much perplexed as he thought over what he should do to educate his sons. True it was, that as they now were, in an assembly of the learned they would have to sit, helpless, like oxen in the mire. But why should he be sad, and indulge in vain regrets over the conduct of his sons, who like all mortals, and even the Gods themselves, are controlled by an inexorable fate. But no, he could not satisfy his conscience for neglect of his sons, by any soothing doctrines concerning fate and necessity. Only weak men whine about destiny. The lion hearted compel fortune. The deer does not run into the mouth of the sleeping lion. The richest seed



will not yield its oil, unless trouble is taken to crush it. As the potter moulds his clay, so can a man fashion his destiny, at least within certain limits. At any rate it were as useless to trust in fate alone for success, as to try to drive a coach that has but one wheel. The most earnest effort to succeed must be made, and then should a man fail who can blame? After these reflexions the King called a sabha or assembly of the Pandits of his realm, and asked, "who amongst you is such a sage that by his instruction he can bring my ignorant and erring sons to a new life." Vishnusarman, a great scholar and eloquent teacher undertook the task. Compliments between the King and teacher were exchanged, and he hoped that a six months course under his method would improve the manners of the Princes. The mode of teaching he adopted was conversational, and the Hitopadesa purports to be a summary of his lessons.

Let us take a glance at the mere skeleton outline of some of the stories and proverbs of the Hitopadesa. The first book introduces a Crow, Laghupatanaka, who, with a number of other birds, lived in a tree on the bank of the Godaveri River. One morning early, the crow, with a presentiment that something bad would happen, saw a fowler going towards the forest. Following him up the crow saw him spread his net and scatter rice grains to allure his game. Very soon a flock of pigeons, following Chitragriva their leader, passing by, were astonished to see rice scattered in the forest. A debate started as to whether they should alight. Chitragriva warned them to run no risk, and told them how a hypocritical old tiger that he knew, pretended to be very good, and anxious to give away a gold bracelet he carried on his paw, succeeded in befooling an unwary traveler, and in the end devoured him. A rash young pigeon said, while the story was a good one, if pigeons were over nice, where would they ever get a dinner. The birds in the end alighted, the fowler pulled the string of his net, and they were all caught.

Then the whole flock, entangled in the net, bitterly reproached the young pigeon who led the agitation to alight. As it is said: never lead a crowd; for it scantily rewards its leader when he succeeds, and kills him when he fails. But Chitragriva generously attributed their plight more to misfortune, than to the fault of the daring pigeon, and cited couplets to shew that the best meant service to others, may chance to bring them trouble. Instead of blame and recriminations, they must make a common effort to fly away at once

with the net, before the fowler came. He knew a friendly mouse who perhaps would nibble away the meshes of the net and free them. The strength of any one of them was not much, but if the whole flock would exert their strength at the same moment, the net could be lifted readily enough; single blades of grass were weak, but by twisting many of them together, men made ropes strong enough to bind the strongest elephants.

The pigeons flew up with the net, and carried it to the mouse king, Hiranyaka, whom they called out from his curious little dwelling, for safety, made with an hundred doors. The mouse regrets to see his friends in so sorry a plight, and attributes their trouble to an all powerful fate, which none can escape; when the time for destruction to stretch her arm has come, she reaches a long distance. The mouse began at once to free the pigeons, beginning with the king first. But with the magnanimity of a true leader, he insisted that all the flock should be freed before himself, notwithstanding the warning of the mouse that his somewhat delicate teeth might give out before they were all liberated.

The crow, who had watched the whole proceedings with astonishment, then proposed that the mouse and he should be friends; but the mouse was diffident, and replied that while a wise man encourages yoking creatures together in the bonds of friendship, wherever the union is equal and seemly, he knows there can be no friendship between a hawk and its quarry. Nothing but misfortune, said the mouse, can spring from affection between a creature that is food and the creature that feeds on him. Indeed, he knew a case in point, where a deer would have been a victim to a cruel jackal who pretended friendship for him, had it not been for a crow. The crow and deer had long been friends, and when the jackal thrust his friendship on the deer, the crow said it would be like the cat's friendship for the vulture, to get the young birds that were in the same tree. And true enough that jackal managed to entice the deer into a cornfield, where, he knew the farmer had set a gin for him. And when the deer was caught, the greedy jackal sneaked around longing for his blood, and like the hypocrite he was, he could not loosen the snare on Sunday, because it was made of sinew and he pretended it would pollute him if he touched it. The deer would have died, had the crow not advised him to sham death when the farmer came to take up his snare. The ruse succeeded, and the farmer, after loosen-

ing the snare from, as he supposed, the dead animal, was so enraged, when at a sign from the crow, the deer ran off, that he hurled his staff at random after him, which as luck would have it, struck and killed the jackal, who was lurking by till the deer should die.

These are fair samples of Indian Fables. The story forming the narrative is only a frame for a second story, and the second story is the same for the third, or more. As each story is given with minute touches of detail, and illustrative quotations from the poets, it requires familiarity with the book, to keep the thread of the narrative intact. The story of the cat and vulture is a perfect satire on the hypocrisy which in the guise of sanctity aims at selfish ends. The cat puts the vulture off his guard by pretending to carry out the most rigid austerities, while sacred verses, which enjoin hospitality, are quoted with such shew of learning, and so glibly, that the poor vulture becomes ashamed of having doubted the cat's integrity. Does not, he asks, the good man shew mercy to him who is worthless, just as the moon sheds her rays on the outcast's hovel. Another verse he gives is from the Great Indian Epic poem : it is one of the passages which attracted Prof. H. H. Wilson's attention to Sanskrit literature. I will borrow for you the poetical version into which it was translated by the late John Muir :

“ That foe repel not with a frown  
Who claims thy hospitable aid ;  
A tree refuses not its shade  
To him who comes to cut it down.”

An artist by virtue of his calling has the right to limn his characters true to his ideal conception of them, or Narayana, the compiler of these fables, must be set down as a sorry cynic, for his finest citations are often put into the mouths of his worst animals, and for despicable ends. When the jackal seeks the friendship of the deer in order to ruin him, he urges : that to ask is this man of our own, or an alien, is a mark of narrowmindedness. The whole earth is of kin to the generous hearted.

The crow so strongly presses his desire to be on friendly terms with the mouse, and by his discourse evinces such integrity of character, that the mouse accedes to his wishes, and for a long time they in close friendship live pleasantly together. After a time food, in that district, became scarce for the crow, and at his suggestion they went on to a lake, where a friend of his, a tortoise named

Manthara, lived. The mouse king was introduced by the crow to the tortoise, who received them hospitably, and after the crow had told Manthara about the pigeons, and how the mouse had freed them from the net, Manthara asked the mouse why he had left the town and retired to the forest, the mouse said he formerly lived in the City of Champa, in the house of a begging friar, named Chudakarna, who used, at night, to hang on a nail in the wall his begging bowl, containing the fragments of alms he had collected during the day. That bowl, said the mouse, I regularly plundered every night, till I had collected quite a store in the earth where I burrowed. One day a neighboring friar, who was visiting Chudakarna, was surprised to see how high I could jump from the floor to pilfer from that bowl. He watched where I ran, unearthed the horde I had industriously collected, and alas ! left me poor and wretched ; for as it is said : better live in a forest infested with tigers and elephants, on fruits and water, clad in garments of bark, and grass for a bed, than, when your fortune is lost, to dwell in the midst of friends. He who has a contented mind lacks nothing. The man whose foot is well shod, has, as it were, the earth covered for him with leather. And poetry, and the companionship of a true friend, are at least two delicious fruits still found amongst the insipid products of the tree of human life.

When the mouse finished speaking, the tortoise continued the discourse in a like philosophic strain. Riches, he said, are but as dust on the feet ; youth flies past with the swiftness of a mountain torrent, vital strength is transient as a tremulous dew drop ; life itself is as foam on the river. He alone who gives others his wealth saves it ; kept, it is but a burden borne for another, and a vessel of trouble. He considered the fault of their friend, the mouse, was, he saved too much. It is wisdom to continually save a little, but folly to save much. It is hard to find these virtues in the same man : generosity and kind words, heroism and clemency, wealth and liberality, and knowledge without conceit. Let me tell you, he continued, how an over greedy jackal lost his life through his greed. A hunter one day chased a deer into the Vindhya forest and killed him. While hauling the deer along, he espied a wild boar. He at once threw down the carcass of the deer, sent a well-aimed arrow from his bow and mortally wounded the boar, who with a roar like thunder, turned on his assailant, and, with the tusks, so gored him

that he at length fell like a tree cut at its roots. A serpent, hidden in the grass, in the struggle, was trampled to death. A prowling jackal chancing to come that way, found the dead bodies of man, deer, boar and serpent, and thought himself in luck, to find three months' food in one spot. In gloating over his prey, and estimating for how long a time they would appease his hunger, he niggardly decided that the sinew of the hunters' bow string would serve him for the first day, and began to eat it. But so soon as he had bitten the bow string through, in the twinkling of an eye the up-springing bow pierced Dirgharava, the greedy jackal, to the heart. It is well not to long after the unattainable, nor to bewail the lost. Wheel-like, sadness and joy turn round for all. It is folly to be over anxious for what the Creator has already provided. The mother's breasts stream with milk when her offspring come into the world. He who makes the geese white, the parrots green, and the peacocks many colored, he will provide for thee.

The three friends lived happily together, and a deer, who was fleeing from his pursuers, was admitted as a member of the little circle. From the deer they learned that hunters were coming that way, and after much deliberation, and good story-telling, which we must pass over, they resolved to seek out another pool, and started on the way. The poor tortoise was caught *en route* by a hunter, to whose bow he was bound. The three friends were dejected at his capture, but decided to attempt his rescue so long as the hunter kept in the forest. On his way homeward, the hunter, tired and thirsty, sat down at the foot of a tree to drink some water. The mouse quickly contrived a plot to free Manthura. The deer must feign to be dead, stretched out by the water's edge, the crow must stand over him picking something with his beak, which would be sure to catch the hunter's eye, who would hurry to secure the deer, when he, the mouse, could gnaw the string which fastened the tortoise, who could escape into the water, and the deer, at the last moment, could jump up and run off. All happened as the mouse planned it, and when the hunter went back to the tree, where he had left his bow, and found the tortoise gone, he blamed himself for his loss, and went his way, thinking that the man who leaves a certainty to run after something doubtful is apt to lose both. With this apologue, Vishnuserman closes his first story collection, called Mitralabha, or the gaining of friends.



A merchant named Vardhamana loaded his ox-cart with wares of different sorts, and started on a trip to Cashmire. He was rich, but his friends were richer, and for that reason he was anxious to increase his wealth. Looking at the lowly, a man may become rich in his own estimation, but looking upwards all are poor. Water constantly falling, though but drop by drop, will fill the pitcher; accretion, though particle by particle, will make the ant hill; and after that method, knowledge, virtue and wealth may be acquired. In travelling through the great forest Sudurga, one of his oxen, Sanjivaka, fell down broken kneed, and could go no further. This made the merchant think that no matter how well laid a man's plans are, they can bear no fruit without the aid of Providence; and so long as a man does not lose heart he may succeed. Pondering over such thoughts, he went back, bought another ox, returned for his cart and proceeded on his journey, leaving the foundered ox to his fate. The injured ox did not perish, but grew strong, and in time roamed bellowing about the forest.

One day a lion, named Pingalica, who was lord of that forest, went down to the Jumna river to drink, but when he heard, to him, the strange sound of the bellowing ox, he turned tail and went back to his cover, wondering if his throne were in danger. This was witnessed by Damanaka and Karataka, two jackals, who had hereditary claims to be ministers at the lion's court, but who at that time were, for some reason, out of court favor. The two talked over what they had seen, as well as their grievances against the king, but Karataka thought that criticism of the lion's conduct was not their business; their business was to hunt up food, and if they went beyond their own sphere of duty, in the end they might share a like fate to that of the monkey, who lost his life by pulling out the wedge from the sawyer's plank. It might be all right, he said, for the chief minister to concern himself about his sovereign's doings; no one else had the right to do so, even from regard for the king, and if anyone were foolish enough to think he had, he would be liable to fare as the braying donkey did.

Damanaka asks to hear the story, and Karataka says: A laundryman in Varanasi, had gone to bed at night, and with his wife was soundly sleeping, when thieves broke in to steal his goods. In the courtyard of the house there stood a donkey tied up, and a dog lay near him. The ass said to the dog, friend this is your business,

why don't you bark and wake our master? The dog replied, my dear you have no right to cross question me ; and I may ask if you know how faithfully I have watched this house day and night, so that for years our master has had no trouble, and that because he has had none, he does not now deem it worth while to feed me. The ass calls the dog a villain for harboring such thoughts in a time of peril, and angrily declaring he will see that the master is roused, starts to bray. He brayed loud and long, and the laundryman awakened from a sound sleep, became so enraged at the noise, that he ran out with a stick and thrashed the ass nearly to death.

The two jackals confidentially talk over the numerous trials, which servants, even of high estate, must bear from their masters, and of the fulsome flattery the successful courtier must stoop to practise. Damanaka shrewdly foresees, that the strange bellowing, heard by the lion, in the forest, may be turned to account, as a means for getting his friend and himself reinstated in Pingalica's favor, and to that end he seeks an interview with the lion. The story of the meeting is admirably told. He seeks the presence of his august master because he thinks there is an opportunity to render his sovereign a slight service. The meanest things are sometimes found by his majesty to be useful ; and his talents, be they what they may, with unreserved devotion, are at the royal service. Where all are put on the same dead level, the services of the most energetic are lost to the state. A diamond may roll on the anklet of a nautch girl, and a paste jewel may flauntingly debase the crown of a monarch ; no matter, let them stay where they are ; glass after all is but glass, the gem remains a gem. A jewel that should have a gold setting may chance to be set in lead, it does not grumble, but shines just the same ; the jeweller who blundered in the setting is the one who is culpable. The lion avers he did not wish to force Damanaka to retire, and that ill disposed tattlers must have told his servant lies. Damanaka is invited to speak in confidence as the king's minister, and asks the lion why he did not drink at the river, and what causes him apprehension ? He himself has also heard that terrible noise but cannot advise the lion till he learns more about it. One thing is certain, an animal that bellows in such a manner must be a creature of immense strength. Both jackals are reinstated in the lion's favor, and together they go in quest of the bellowing monster. On the way Karatika asks Damanaka if he knows what the noise is. Damanaka

replies, of course he knows ; he knew before he went to see the lion. It is made by an ox, an animal jackals eat every day. Karataka asks why did you not tell the king so. If I had, quoth he, do you think we should have been taken into favor again? A master's fears are not to be allayed at once. Did Karataka never hear the story of Dadhikarna? Well, he would tell it.

There was a lion who lived on the Arbuda-Sikhara Mountain, who was plagued by a mouse, which grew so bold that it even gnawed the tip of his mane, though the lion could never catch it. At last he thought it would be best to fight the mouse with its natural enemy ; so he went to the village and got a cat, whom he treated well, and of whom the mouse was so frightened that it kept in its hole. Whenever the lion heard the mouse stirring, he was sure to treat the cat with extra attention. One day the mouse, driven by hunger, came out of his hole, and was caught by the cat. From that day the lion cared no more for the cat, who soon perished from hunger.

With much finesse the lion and ox were brought together. The ox soon became a favorite at court, and in lieu of the jackals, became purveyor for the royal household. A number of good stories are told while these things came to pass. Damanaka tells Karataka that the promotion of the ox, and their abasement, is their own fault, and brings forward striking instances of others who suffered in a similar way. So long as only they themselves were to blame, it were foolish to complain. One thing was worth attention. They formerly made the lion and ox friends, why could they not now make them enemies. An artist on a smooth even surface represents mountains and valleys, and gives them at will the semblance of things near at hand, or things at a distance. So a skilful plotter, can make falsehood look like truth. Damanaka succeeded in his purpose. He tells the lion confidentially that the ox aims at his crown ; and he tells the ox confidentially that the lion intends to devour him. At last the ox is slain by the lion, who too late repents his cruel deed ; and so ends the second book.

The third book narrates how the geese and peacocks went to war, and how the crows, in the guise of friends gained entrance to the goose fortress and betrayed the geese. The crane Dirghamukha, a subject of the goose-king Hiranyagarbha liked to see foreign parts. One day he was travelling over a piece of burnt woods, in the

Vindhya Mountains, which belonged to Chitravarna king of the peacocks, when he was challenged to tell who he was, and whence he came. After making respectful answer, the peacocks asked him, whether of the two countries and kings are the better, yours or ours? In reply, he said that his country was like a paradise, and his king was worthy of his country, but as for theirs, he would advise them to emigrate from such a desert. When he said this, they became exasperated, as the monkeys did when the birds in a rain storm advised them to build places of shelter. Advice to fools is like milk to a serpent, it only increases the natural flow of venom.

All this, after his return home, was related by the crane, to the goose-king, Hiranyagarbha, who was interested in its recital, and enquired what then was done. Sire, said the crane, they asked me who made you king; when I hurled back the taunt, and asked who made your peacock king; whereupon they tried to take my life. The king laughingly hinted that the crane did not prudently estimate his position in the midst of enemies, or he would have controlled his tongue better. Did not the ass, clad in a tiger's skin, come to grief through his voice? The crane, going on with his story, said: I was at length taken before the peacock-king, who bade me return home and warn your majesty to prepare for war, adding that he would send his own herald, the parrot, with me. The parrot refused to accompany me, giving as his reason stories showing the danger of being found in bad company. He knew of a traveller, who, one hot summer day, lay down to rest under the shade of a tree. He slept soundly, and so long that the shadow of the tree passed off his face, when a good-natured goose, who, with a crow, lived in the tree, spread his wings and kept the sun's glare off the traveller's face. The weary man slept pleasantly, and in his deep sleep opened his mouth. The crow, from his inborn ill-nature, could not bear to see another happy, even in sleep; so he bespattered the traveller's face with filth and flew away. The sleeper awoke, seized his bow, and in his anger shot the goose, whom he took to be the cause of his discomfiture. That is what came of living with a villain. I said, the parrot, as herald, represented his sovereign, and that if he came with me, I should so honour him. The parrot said my action in stirring up bad blood between the two countries branded me as a bad fellow, and fair words in the mouth of such an one were as flowers out of season. He was not to be



flattered, as the wheelwright was by his wife, to discredit the evidence of his own senses. After that I hurried back to inform your majesty ; and the parrot, as herald from the peacocks, will soon be here.

The goose-king and his minister held a secret council, at which the minister avowed his conviction to be, the younger officers of their own army desired war, and had made the crane their tool. A sick man is best for the doctor, a debtor for the sheriff, an ignoramus for the school-master. Confidential spies were appointed, and before the council broke up, the arrival of the parrot was announced, and a warder was instructed to shew him suitable apartments. It was decided to construct a fort and provision it at once. Very soon a crow with his retinue came from Ceylon, to proffer his aid in the coming war. The king said crows saw much, and knew almost everything, and he might be received. But the wary minister said crows were land birds, and their natural place in a fight was with land birds. Moreover, the fool who deserts from his own side generally meets with his reward, as did the blue jackal of whom he would tell the king. A prowling jackal one night fell into an indigo vat, from which he could not get out. By feigning to be dead, he was next morning thrown on a rubbish heap by the dyer, and at the first chance skulked back to the woods. When he saw his pelt, from the indigo, had been made a fine blue color, he thought he could turn his mishap to some account. So he called the jackals together, and informed them that he had been appointed by the presiding divinity of that forest as king over all its animals, and that the goddess had installed him as sovereign by anointing him with the essence of certain sacred herbs, which gave him the royal color as badge of his supremacy. His right to rule was soon recognized by all the forest-dwelling animals. In the early part of his reign, his body guard and confidential attendants were jackals ; but when lions, tigers and such like noble animals came to his court, he favored them and neglected, and affected to despise, the whole jackal race. The jackals were sorely dejected at being scorned by their capricious king, and an old and cunning member of the tribe planned a scheme to be revenged on him for his injustice. At twilight, when the full court had assembled, all the jackals, at a pre-concerted signal, altogether, began to yell. Taken by surprise, the race instinct of the king was dominant, and he yelled with the rest,



Then the greater beasts knew him to be only a jackal, and turned on him and slew him. Whatever the natural disposition may be, that will be hard to conquer. If a dog were made king, some time or another he would gnaw his master's shoe.

The parrot was accorded an interview and was so insulting and boastful, that the king grew angry with him, and was about to accept the crow's offer to kill him, when the minister interfered just in time to prevent the disgrace of an ambassador being killed at the court to which he was accredited. A spy brings news of the approaching invaders, and that the goose-king is harboring a traitor. The minister reiterates his belief that the traitor is none other than the crow ; but the king misled by the apparent zeal of the crow to kill the parrot, declined to withdraw his confidence. The crow, he said, was a stranger, but strangers were sometimes of great service. A foreigner by his kindness may become as a relation, and a relation by his harshness as a foreigner. The seeds of death are nurtured in one's own body, the healing drug in the distant forest. Did they not know the story of the prince, who, after a short service gave up his only son to save his sovereign,

The invading army was attacked on the march, and suffered great loss. But the fortunes of war were retrieved ; the fort was invested ; the crow, who was a traitor, threw fire into the stores, and after hard fighting on both sides, the great fortress of the goose-king was taken.

The fourth book relates to peace. It opens with Hiranyagarbha complaining against the evil fate which led him to trust the crow. The minister reminded his majesty, that, though when we err it is pleasanter to blame our unlucky stars than ourselves, nevertheless it is unwise to do so, and it is equally foolish to disregard the advice of well wishing friends, as the tortoise did when he fell from the stick and perished. The story runs. In the Magadha country there is a lake, where lived two geese and a tortoise, who was their friend. One day the tortoise heard some fishermen say, that on the morrow they would fish in that lake, and expected a great catch of fish and turtles. He told his friends the geese, and asked what he should do. They told him they would think over it to-morrow. The tortoise said : his trouble was near at hand, and action must be taken at once to be of any service. Said he, you must at once help me to go to another lake. How can we do that, said the geese ? If you, replied

the tortoise, only hold a stick in your bills, by its ends, I can grip it with my beak in the middle, and you can carry me through the air to the other lake. Good, said the geese ; but if we carry you in that fashion, the crowd below will cry and jeer at such a sight, and if you lose your temper and gibe back, you will be killed. What, said the tortoise, you think me a fool, not a word in reply will I say. But when the cowherds ran after this novel convoy through the air, one saying it were as well to roast that tortoise here where he falls, and another saying, no ; better to take him home first, the foolish tortoise forgot his promise, and angrily told them they should lick the dust first. And saying that he fell and was killed.

Two or three other stories, we must pass by, branch off from this main story told by the minister. A spy came in at the close of the minister's story and confirmed what was before known of the crow's treachery. Alas, said the king, he who confides in his enemies from their apparent regard or service, sleeps on a tree top, and is rudely awakened when he falls. The spy reports that he saw the crow at the court of the peacock-king, where he was boasting of his service and laying claim to reward. The king, said the spy, would have given him a viceroyalty but for the earnest protest of the minister, who said such a favor conferred on a low man disappears like water upon sand, and a mean man put in a high position will seek to hurt his master, as the mouse sought to kill the muni who had made him a tiger. This is the tale. In the Gautama forest there lived a great sage named Mahatapa. One day a crow flying away with a mouse let it fall, when the sage picked it up and reared it. A cat sought to catch the mouse, when it ran terrified, for protection to the sage, who, by virtue of his sanctity, changed it into a cat. When the cat stood in terror of a dog, he turned it into a dog ; and when the dog was terrified by a tiger, he made it a tiger. But to the good man, the animal was always the same mouse, whose life he saved. The tiger knew this, and thought, so long as this man lives my antecedents will never be forgotten. So the tiger made up his mind to kill him. But the good man knew the wicked design of the tiger and made it a mouse again.

The minister also told the story of a crane, which lived at the Padmagarbha lake. The crane was old, and no longer able to fish for himself. As he stood dejected, a crab saw him and asked why he stood fasting there? The crane said he had heard fishermen

arrange to drain the lake, and as his livelihood depended on fish, that would be death to him. The danger affected him so much that he cared nothing about food all that day. The news soon spread through the lake district, and in so peculiar a strait, the fish concluded they might for once consult with a natural enemy, so they asked the crane what they should do. He said he knew no way of safety for them, unless one by one he took them to another lake. The foolish fish consented, and one by one they were eaten by that wicked crane. He then cast greedy eyes on a crab whose flesh was a novelty, and agreed to carry him also. The crab saw that the ground over which he was borne was strewn with fish bones, and knew too well their meaning. But quickly deciding to make the best fight he could, he seized the crane's neck with his claw, cut it in two and killed him. So the crane who might have gone on eating fish, died because he could not resist the temptation of crabs' flesh.

The peacock-king called an assembly to consider the subject of national treaties, with a view to learn if he should make an alliance with the goose-king. The crow was questioned, as he had tarried a long time at Hiranyagarbha's court. He said the king was of noble mind, of the old heroic type; and that the man equal to his minister would be hard to find. The peacock-king asked: If they are so able, why did they not detect you as a spy? The crow said: The minister at once suspected me, though there is no more skill in deceiving a frank generous man, than there would be in slaying a child who goes to sleep in your lap. The truthful man judging others by himself, thinks they are truthful, as the Brahmin did with regard to his goat. A certain Brahmin, who lived in the forest of Gautama, went to the village and bought a goat for sacrifice. Going home with the goat on his shoulder he was duped by three sharpers through their persistent preconcerted lying. The first scoundrel said, Hallo Brahmin, why are you carrying a dog on your shoulder? The Brahmin said, it is not a dog but a goat for sacrifice. Going on a short distance, he met scamp number two, who put the same question. This time the Brahmin laid the goat down on the ground, looked at it several times, then put it again on his shoulder, and went on somewhat disconcerted; for the minds of good men even sometimes waver through the words of knaves. Those who trust deceitful men in the end rue it, as the camel did when he trusted to the honor of the jackal. The Brahmin met with the third rogue, who asked

what he meant by carrying a dog about on his shoulder? The Brahmin, completely nonplussed, gave up the beast, purified himself with water, and went home. The rogues took up the goat and ate it.

The peacock-king asked the crow how he could live so long in the enemy's country. The crow said, he who works for his own ends or his master's profit, cannot afford to be nice as to what he does. The old serpent Mandaviserpa carried his enemies on his back, that he might in the end eat them. The serpent who was old, and darted after his prey with difficulty left his place in a deserted garden, crept through the broken wall, and lay dejected near the margin of a small lake. A frog saw him in this plight, and asked him why he did not look after food. The serpent whetted the frog's curiosity by saying he did not know why a frog should take an interest in his ill-fated life, and then said he had bitten and killed the son of a Brahmin, who smote him with a curse, compelling him thenceforth to carry frogs on his back, at their pleasure. Some of the finest passages in the Hitopadesa are put in the serpent's account of the death of the young Brahmin, and the accompanying reflections over life, death, and that sorrow which, in some form, is the invariable concomitant of human life. Life decays like the evaporation of water from a jar, imperceptibly, but surely. The water dries up; and each day's life brings every living being a stage nearer death. All things earthly are transient. Even friendships are rare, and of short duration. A plank may meet a plank in midocean, but never to meet again; and in like manner on the great sea of life, is the meeting of friends. As the wavelets of a river run on and never return; so, night and day, and in a stream that flows on for ever, glide away the lives of morals. The frog told the serpent's story to the king of the frogs, who went and took a daily ride on the serpent's back. On the first day he glided along swiftly to the delight of the frog-king. On the second day his pace was sluggish, and when asked the reason, he said he was exhausted for want of food. Upon this, the frog-king gave the serpent leave to eat some of the common frogs. I accept this great favor from your majesty, said the serpent; and daily thenceforth he partook of the frogs till none of the common frogs was left; and then, he ate the king.

The minister said: And I fear lest you think with reason enough of old stories. The goose-king is a fit ally, and we should

make a treaty with him. The king was not for giving up the war, and waxed angry and blustered, till his minister reminded him that any ill considered action would lead to regret, as did the Brahmins killing of the mungoose. The Brahmin Madhava lived in Uj-jain. One day his wife left him at home, to be for a short time custodian of their young child ; and shortly after came an invitation to him from the king to attend a Sraddha ceremony. The Brahmin was poor and feared if he did not go at once somebody else might go in his place. Still he hesitated on account of the child. In the end he resolved to leave the child in the protection of a tame mungoose which lived in the house. So he went, and had not been long away when a cobra approached the child's bed. The mungoose killed it, and tore it in pieces in his rage. Soon after, the Brahmin came back, and the mungoose rolled at his feet for joy.. But when the Brahmin saw that his mouth and feet were bloodstained, he at once concluded that the beast had killed his child ; and in his wrath he killed the mungoose. When he went into his house he found the child safe and a deadly serpent torn to pieces, and then he bitterly repented his hasty and cruel deed. Do not, said the minister to the king, you in like manner give way to passion in these negotiations. The king yielded to the advice of his minister ; and Vishnusarmans lessons are thus brought to a close.

There is a striking similarity between these fables, and many found in the Greek, and other branches, of Indogermanic literature. Which of these literatures has given, and which has received, and to what degree, are still vexed questions. Some scholars incline with Jacob Grimm to the opinion that many of these apologues must have had a common origin, in the distant past, before either Grecian or Indian literature was in being. Their Indian parentage is without doubt Buddhistic. Numerous Indian stories from old Buddhist books, are found in Chinese works written more than a thousand years ago, while many of the animal fables are in the Jatakas or Buddhist birth stories of which there are five hundred and fifty. Thus it is tolerably certain, that many of these stories which, in different quarters of the earth, for ages have given instruction to, and provoked mirth amongst men, are offshoots from one of the greatest of, what are called, the natural religions of the world.











